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Short Notices

SCHNEIDER, DR. ANNA, *Die Anfänge der Kulturwirtschaft. Die sumerische Tempelstadt.* G. D. Baedeker, Essen, 1920. 120+vi pages.

The publication of sources is always to be encouraged, but an effort should also be made to keep up with these published sources. In our cuneiform studies we have been too apt to think of the texts as an end in themselves, instead of regarding them as a means to the understanding of the history—political, social, economic, and religious, of the Ancient Orient. Kohler and Ungnad, Contenau, Genouillac, and others have made a good start in the right direction, but much remains to be done. Many more detailed studies of particular phases of the ancient civilization of the Tigris-Euphrates valley should be undertaken. Such a study, intended for a circle of readers which should extend well beyond the small group of specialists in cuneiform research, is that of Dr. Anna Schneider. Here an effort has been made to translate the documents, not into a modern language, but into a living picture of "the Sumerian Temple-city." One does not need to agree with every interpretation offered in order to express one's appreciation of the patience and skill the author has shown in the performance of her task.

D. D. LUCKENBILL

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M. NAVILLE, *L'évolution de la langue égyptienne et les langues sémitiques.* Paris: Geuthner, 1920.

M. Naville in his latest book sees successive "somersaults" of language and writing in Egypt, which lead him to look for a parallel situation in Hither Asia. On his interpretation the earliest Egyptian language, written in hieroglyphic and hieratic, was suddenly supplanted by a simplified quasi folk-language, the demotic, for which a new and much conventionalized script had been invented; and this in turn was supplanted by the real folk-language, the Coptic in its various dialects, requiring a third system of writing, procured this time by taking over the Greek alphabet. In Asia, meantime, the cuneiform was replaced by Aramaic, here taken to be "not the property of a people, but a phase of evolution quite analogous to the demotic (p. viii), except that the latter took a second step when it adopted Greek letters. The corresponding second step in Asia the author would find in the rise of the "dialect of Jerusalem," attaining written form in the square Hebrew characters "at the epoch of the Christian era."

So abrupt a succession of linguistic phenomena is of course opposed to common experience, according to which new developments grow regularly out of what has gone before. The treatment of the Egyptian language, from which the discussion starts, is thoroughly reactionary; M. Naville frankly states that "it is impossible" for him "to abandon the old grammar, that of de Rougé and Renouf" (p. 79). Almost half of his book aims to rehabilitate this and to confound the modern conception of Egyptian, which is so unfortunate as to have originated and been largely developed in Berlin. In bringing out the supposed Asiatic parallels it is sought to show that the Hebrew Old Testament is a translation from Aramean. While his theses involve misinterpretations of fact and can scarcely be accepted, M. Naville is to be honored for his pioneering on an unbeaten path.

T. GEORGE ALLEN

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MASON, WILLIAM A., *A History of the Art of Writing*. New York: Macmillan, 1920.

Mr. William A. Mason's recent book, "*A History of the Art of Writing*," is handsomely printed and illustrated, and offers a very readable presentation of its subject. The various stages of thought-indication are taken up in roughly genetic order. Crude non-phonetic methods, beginning with gestures, knots, etc., are shown progressing via the picturing of ideas to the expression of sounds, culminating in the invention of the alphabet. The invention of printing is seen as the latest advance, with a prospect for still further progress in typography. So comprehensive a task as Mr. Mason's has not, so far as the reviewer has noticed, been undertaken since Faulmann's *Illustrirte Geschichte der Schrift* was published in Vienna in 1880. The field covered is so vast—extending from Mexico and the American Indians to China, the Euphrates, and the Nile—that it is only natural to find the author largely dependent upon others for his data. Books and articles consulted are listed in a bibliography of about two hundred titles, of which only a dozen are later than 1907. Hence the point of view adopted is often much older than even that date. A checking of the various chapters by competent specialists before publication might have gone far toward eliminating slips that now shake the reader's confidence. Even so, one can but congratulate both Mr. Mason and his publisher on the attractive result of their efforts.

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RUFFER, SIR ARMAND, *Food in Egypt*. Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1919.

Sir Armand Ruffer, dying in 1917, left among his papers much recently gathered material on the foods of ancient Egypt. Though not in what would have been its final form, this has been collected by his widow and made available by the Institut d'Égypte as the first volume of its *Mémoires*. Sir Armand's notes have been arranged in four chapters, covering respectively animal, cereal, fruit and vegetable foods. Besides direct human consumption, mention is made of the uses of individual foods as offerings to deities and likewise of the mythological significance of various creatures. Chronological attributions of data have wisely been limited almost entirely to dynasties rather than given in years. Such year dates as have slipped in on page 69 seem, though evidently in confusion, to be based on Brugsch's avowedly makeshift scheme published in 1877. The questioned existence of an ancient hornless breed of cattle (p. 2) is settled by Lortet and Gaillard,¹ who have actually published photographs of Eleventh-Dynasty skulls of that type. Use of the Book of the Dead as an authority has led the author (p. 53) to look in vain in this world instead of the next for a barley species "7 cubits (12 feet) in height." His sources included besides this and other ancient Egyptian texts² excavators' reports, modern zoölogical and botanical studies, the Bible, and most especially the classical authors. The picture is fullest, then, for Graeco-Roman times; but the mixture of non-synchronous sources of varying dependability under each variety of food taken up in each chapter obscures the general situation at any given period.

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¹ *La faune momifiée de l'ancienne Égypte*, I, p. 260.

² Mostly following the translations of Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, for the author was not an Egyptologist but a doctor of medicine.